2009

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Published in *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 38:6 (2009), pp 655-665. doi:10.1177/0891241609341780

Annie Marion Maclean, Feminist Pragmatist and Methodologist

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Abstract
Annie Marion Maclean was a major Chicago sociologist and methodologist. She was profoundly influenced by the gendered division of labor in sociology during her era. Maclean combined her work with the men and women of the early Chicago school of sociology and the women of Hull-House, an early social settlement. As a feminist pragmatist, Maclean was both a theorist and practitioner who used qualitative and quantitative methods. She set precedents in the Chicago school of ethnography, participant observation, and critical methodology. Maclean, however, was not the "mother" of ethnography. Harriet Martineau holds a far stronger claim to be a founding contributor to the origin and development of ethnographic methodologies in the social sciences.

Keywords: Chicago school of sociology, critical ethnography, feminist pragmatism, Harriet Martineau, Hull-House, Jane Addams

Annie Marion MacLean was clearly a significant Chicago sociologist whose work and ideas are often neglected (Deegan 1978). As scholars of MacLean, we looked forward to reading the article by Tim Hallett and Greg Jeffers (2008) on "A Long-Neglected Mother of Contemporary Ethnography: Annie Marion MacLean and the Memory of a Method" in the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography.* Alas, the article is riddled with so many lacunae, misleading implications, and outright misstatements that our pleased anticipation quickly deepened into grave disappointment. MacLean deserves much better. Despite the fact that Hallett and Jeffers baldly assert that their "primary goal is not historical, " they nonetheless argue that they "engage MacLean's history to the extent that it helps us understand her relevance for ethnography today" (p. 8). Thus, *to the extent* that their admittedly limited history is inferentially muddled or inaccurate, their subsequent *understanding* of MacLean's continuing relevance is necessarily erected on questionable premises, the intellectual consequences of which lie beyond the scope of this comment. Suffice it to say that contributing and compounding errors in our disciplinary accounts is no small matter, especially where the work of women and other minorities is concerned (e.g., Deegan 1978, 1981, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c, 1991, 1994, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1998, 2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2008). Relevant guides to the exploration and mapping of our disciplinary history are more or less readily available (e.g., Deegan 1988b; Hill 1993, 2000, 200lb). Make no mistake, we clearly understand MacLean to be an important sociologist, but justice to MacLean demands that we construct our intellectual appreciations on sound and careful articulations of the biographical and sociological record. Due to limitations of space and time, only a few of Hallet and Jeffers's missteps are mentioned below. To begin, we locate MacLean's career within the gendered division of sociological labor, a crucial nexus of work and ideas that Hallett and Jeffers failed to draw fully or correctly.

Annie Marion MacLean drew on the long-established work of the Hull-House school of sociology (especially the work of Jane Addams and Florence Kelley) in developing her own theoretical views and methodological techniques. Sadly, Hallet and Jeffers failed to accurately identify or explore MacLean's allegiance to the Hull-House school of sociology and its associated theories, praxis, and methodologies. The Hull-House connection is well documented in Deegan's scholarship, briefly summarized below.

MacLean adhered to the ideas and practices of "feminist pragmatism," a powerful theory of the unity of ideas and action in a democratic and cooperative community. It emerged from women's values and culture and remains today an articulate, international alternative to patriarchy, laissez-faire capitalism, and white racism. The feminist pragmatist tradition countered these

structural limitations in society as a whole but also opposed their frequent echoes in sociology per se (Deegan 1988a, 1995, 2002a, 2002b, 2007). In sum, it was—and is—a liberating and powerful perspective.

Feminist pragmatism includes the ideas and practices of liberation sociology (Feagin and Vera 2008), ideas produced by many of the most influential feminists in the history of the United States. They developed and enacted this theory in Chicago, especially between 1892 and 1920, largely in work centered at Hull-House. Some of the most famous women who generated this theory of social action included Jane Addams, Florence Kelley, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Marion Talbot. Collectively, the feminist pragmatists were significant leaders in a large social and intellectual network. Annie Marion MacLean (e.g., 1899a, 1899b, 1903) figured prominently in this network of eminent women that also included the likes of Edith Abbott, Emily Greene Balch, Sophonisba Breckinridge, Katherine Bement Davis, Francis Kellor, Mary McDowell, Ellen Gates Starr (Deegan and Wahl 2003), and Jessie Taft (for concise introductions to these women, see Deegan 1991). Furthermore, the feminist pragmatist network boasted several notable men, including John Dewey, George Herbert Mead, William I. Thomas, and Thorstein Veblen (see Deegan 1988a, 1999, 2001, 2008). All were "organic intellectuals" who spoke to everyday people while employing sophisticated ideas and outlining powerful plans of action (Feagin and Vera 2008, 61-62; West 1989). They were charismatic leaders trusted by both elites and common citizens alike. The feminist pragmatist tradition, in which MacLean played a central part, continues today through feminist social movements and the work of many scholars, including us.

To fully appreciate MacLean's work, it is important to note that feminist pragmatists employed both quantitative *and* qualitative methodologies: they opposed dichotomized categories of thought and practice. This use of dual techniques is evidenced in the groundbreaking sociological text, *Hull-House Maps and Papers,* written by the Residents of Hull-House (1895) and edited by Addams. This landmark volume predated and established the interests of the early Chicago male sociologists and their school of sociology (Deegan 1988a), including their student Annie Marion MacLean. This text also influenced and dramatically structured the work of W.E.B. DuBois, especially in *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899; see Deegan 1988c, 2002b). Indeed, nearly one-fifth of *The Philadelphia Negro* was written by Isabel Eaton (1895), a former resident of Hull-House and a contributor to *Hull-House Maps and Papers.* Significantly, Eaton was a former resident of the College Settlement, where MacLean resided in the summer of 1900. The precedence and signal importance of *Hull-House Maps and Papers* in American sociology is well established.

Hallett and Jeffers, however, ascribe MacLean's use of the ethnographic survey to DuBois without recognizing the precedence of Addams and the Hull-House residents in this work (p. 23). Hallett and Jeffers also fail to understand the dual use of ethnography and quantitative data which is intrinsic to feminist pragmatism and thus to MacLean's work. They deem such a pattern to be "unMacLean" (p. 32, n. 13) and thus impose their own dichotomy on her otherwise integrated and holistic approach.

Hallett and Jeffers make MacLean "a founding member of the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (which became the American Association of University Women), the American Sociological Society (which became the American Sociological Association), [and] the Consumers' League" (pp. 7-8). These would be mighty accomplishments, if true. Instead, the Association of Collegiate Alumnae (ACA) was founded in November 1881, in Boston, when MacLean was but twelve years old. Marion Talbot was one of the seventeen founders (Talbot and Rosenberry 1931, 9). Interestingly, Talbot was on the faculty of the University of Chicago where MacLean later studied after taking degrees at Wolfville, Nova Scotia, from Acadia University *(not* Acadia College, as stated by Hallett and Jeffers, p. 4). When MacLean eventually joined the local ACA group, which met at Hull-House, she would have been allied with Talbot, Breckinridge, and Addams, who were also members of this branch (e.g., Talbot and Rosenberry 1931, 236-3 7). Thus, MacLean did not avoid three of the alleged "Chicago mafia" as an anonymous reviewer of Hallett and Jeffers's paper suggested (p. 32, n. 22).

MacLean was definitely an *early* member of the American Sociological Society (ASS); her name appears in the inaugural list of dues paying members *(American Sociological Society* 1907, 141), along with Jane Addams, Emily Greene Balch, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Mary McDowell, Anna Garlin Spencer, and Marion Talbot, all women with strong ties to Hull House. But the attribution to MacLean of being a *founding* member, along with its implications of active organizational instrumentality, are less certain. The ASS was founded during two organizational sessions held at Johns Hopkins University on December 27 and 28, 1905, concurrent with the annual meeting of the American Economics Association *(American Journal of Sociology* 1906; Hill 2007). The official report does not record MacLean as attending either session, although it notes the input of Lucile Eaves another early and significant female sociologist (Deegan 1991). For the record, the list of speakers and attendees is detailed but probably incomplete. Also, for the record, MacLean was not among those who registered for the 1905 meeting of the American Economic Association (American Economic Association 1906, 30-31). Thus, was Mac Lean present at the founding of the ASS when the

members adopted a constitution and elected the first officers? The historical record, to this point, stands mute.

The National Consumers' League (NCL) was established in 1899 as a national organization of state and local leagues-it did not have individual members per se. The Illinois Consumers' League was an especially active branch, and the first two national meetings of the NCL were convened at Hull-House. Mrs. Charles Henrotin (1901, 17-18), president of the Illinois league, specifically noted the unfailing support and participation of Jane Addams. Florence Kelley, an important Hull-House resident, was active in the Illinois branch and left the Chicago social settlement to take up her new home at Henry Street in New York City and a position as the secretary of the NCL. Charles Henderson, one of MacLean's sociology professors at the University of Chicago, was active in the campus branch of the NCL in Hyde Park. Thus, MacLean's important participant observations of department stores during the December holiday season in 1899 unfolded within the intricate web of relationships between Hull-House, sociology at the University of Chicago, and the League's concern with the deleterious effects resulting from "the abnormal conditions known as Christmas Shopping." At the same time, there is no evidence for the statement that MacLean was a founding member of the NCL. Her name is not listed in the League's first annual report (National Consumers' League 1900), and to our knowledge, MacLean never served as an officer in the NCL. It would be accurate, however, to state that her research efforts were highly valued by the Illinois Consumers' League. Henrotin noted appreciatively in her report on the activities of the Illinois league,

> Miss MacLean's article, 'Two Weeks in Department Stores," which was first published in the *Journal of Sociology,* and afterward reprinted for the benefit of the League, has also been widely circulated. (P. 18)

Specifically, there were strong working connections between MacLean, the women of Hull-House, sociology at the University of Chicago, and the Illinois Consumers League: together, they supported, endorsed and promulgated MacLean's ethnographic research. More generally, however, Hallett and Jeffers's claim that MacLean was "a founding member" of the ACA, the ASS, and the NCL has no demonstrable empirical basis.

Although Hallett and Jeffers (p. 32, n. 11) were unable to connect MacLean to Sydney and Beactrice Webb and their field notes method, MacLean was, in fact, connected to the British empirical tradition through Hull-House's Edith Abbott. Thus, MacLean (1910, 191) not only cited Abbott's work, but Abbott was a student of Beatrice Webb and taught statistics at

the University of Chicago Department of Sociology (Deegan 1978). For the record, Webb also influenced the making of *Hull-House Maps and Papers,* visited Hull-House, and was an important Fabian sociologist (see Deegan 1988a). MacLean (1910, 194) also cited Abbott's (1906) article on Harriet Martineau. Furthermore, it was Martineau (1838a)-not Vivian Palmer (p. 32, n. 12)-who wrote the first methods handbook.

In looking for "mothers" of ethnography, Martineau is the predominant candidate. Shulamit Reinharz (1992, 48) writes,

> Harriet Martineau's *Society in America,* published in 1837, is an example of an early feminist ethnography. The introduction to her book explains that the researcher's duty is to give detailed observational data so that readers may judge her interpretations. Heeding her own rules, Martineau gave a full report, including dates and the principal means she used to "obtain knowledge of the country."

Reinharz (1992, 49-50) concludes, *"Society in America* deserves to be studied as one of the earliest feminist ethnographies and as a profound contribution to the understanding of U.S. women's lives," noting, "In my view, Alice Fletcher developed the dimensions of what has come to be known as anthropological fieldwork, just as Harriet Martineau did for sociological fieldwork."

In *How to Observe Morals and Manners,* the first methods text in sociology, Martineau (1838a) employed the pedagogically engaging metaphor of travelers in strange lands to provide sophisticated and foundational recommendations concerning bias, the role of theory, listening to discourse, making observations, recording entries in daily journals, and keeping notebooks (see especially Hill 1989, 200la; Lengermann and Niebrugge 2001). Martineau was a well-known and much-published sociological observer of everyday life (see, for example, Martineau 1837, 1838a, 1838b, 1844, 1848, 1849, 1852, 1861, 1877, 2004). Her place and priority in the sociological canon is now well documented (for elaboration, see Hill and Hoecker-Drysdale 2001). Was MacLean specifically influenced by Martineau's insightful and pioneering methodological treatise, or by Martineau's methods as then generally understood? We cannot say, but the existing bibliographical link, via Edith Abbott, at least makes this hypothesis a well-considered possibility.

Succinctly, MacLean was not a "mother of contemporary ethnography" unless one wants to make the other Hull-House women who "inspired" her (MacLean 1910, 168)-and others-the "grandmothers" of contemporary ethnography *and* social surveys (Deegan 2004a, 2004b). "Motherhood"

becomes an increasingly less useful metaphor. Must Martineau now be labeled a great-grandmother? Is MacLean, perhaps, to be a grandniece, a distant cousin, or a maiden aunt? In all, we find compounded familistic terminology unhelpful here. There is no "genetic code" (p. 3) for the founding sisters of sociology (Deegan 1991). But feminist pragmatism does point us to paths leading away from endless debates and divisions. Recent explications of "postmodernism" and *au courant* excursions in "contemporary ethnography" have much to gain from revisiting the pioneering, more encompassing, and openly cooperative feminist pragmatist vision of the early female founders of sociology, who worked together for social justice and the common good.

Conflicting Interest — The authors declared no conflicts of interests with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding — The authors received no financial support for the research and/or authorship of this article.

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